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Augusta-Richmond County Breaks Ground on New HQ

On Sept. 22, 2008, the Augusta Public Library broke ground on a new 90,000-square-foot library. The new facility is approximately three times the size of the existing library, and will be located right across the street from the current building. Like the existing library, it will function as the headquarters for the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library and the East Central Georgia Regional Library, which serves Richmond, Columbia, Burke, Lincoln and Warren counties.

"Many people have worked for several years to bring about the start of construction," remarked Gary Swint, library director. "The current building was built 50 years ago, and the needs of the community have long outgrown its capacity. The new library will be a focus of redevelopment in the central city and a source of pride for the entire area."

The groundbreaking was truly a community event. On a beautiful Monday morning, community leaders, library officials and children from local schools enthusiastically broke ground on the new library. The day was historic because it not only signifies the revitalization of a library, but also a community.

"The public library has a rich history in Augusta, but perhaps the most exciting news is that the public library will have an amazing future — as evidenced by the more than 300 people that were in attendance, with shovels in hand, ready to see the new library get underway!" said



Shovels in hand, hundreds of people participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Augusta library.

Millie Klosinski, development officer for the library. Schoolchildren sang songs and recited poems, and a local author, Karin Gillespie, spoke about the power of libraries to change lives.

The event was "BYOS": Bring Your Own Shovel or Spade. After local officials and board members broke ground, everyone was invited to "dig in." For those without a shovel, plastic commemorative spades were made available. The community came together to the tune "Celebration" by Kool & the Gang.

The new library, which will be located at the corner of Telfair Street and James Brown Boulevard, will feature a 300-person meeting room, Friends of the Library Shop, teen space and computer center, study rooms, a Georgia Local History Room, and a Talking Book Center to serve those who are visually or physically challenged. ►►



Tifton-Tift County Public Library Breaks Ground

The Tifton-Tift County Public Library, a member of the Coastal Plain Regional Library system, broke ground on its expansion/renovation project on Nov. 6. The day was bright and sunny, and there were smiles all around the large crowd of dignitaries and friends who came out to celebrate the second stage of the renovation process. Dr. Hal Henderson, chairman of the Tifton-Tift County Public Library board of trustees addressed the crowd, and further remarks were made by Sen. Joseph Carter and Tifton Mayor Jamie Cater.

The library has already completed environmental abatement and some

demolition. The renovation project will cost \$3 million, with move-in scheduled for December 2009.

The most challenging part of the renovation is the 1911 wing of the library (photos at left), which originally served as a post office for the city. The Italianate-styled edifice with Victorian Romanesque highlights was renovated to serve as the Tifton-Tift County Public Library in the 1960s, making it one of the oldest, continuously used facilities in Tifton.

With the new addition of 1,830 square feet, the library will expand to 24,850 square feet. Photos are online at www.cprl.org. ►►